

Department of Veterans Affairs

§ 19.7

Subpart A—Operation of the Board of Veterans' Appeals

§ 19.1 Establishment of the Board.

The Board of Veterans' Appeals is established by authority of, and functions pursuant to, title 38, United States Code, chapter 71.

§ 19.2 Composition of the Board; Titles.

(a) The Board consists of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Deputy Vice Chairmen, Members and professional, administrative, clerical and stenographic personnel. Deputy Vice Chairmen are Members of the Board who are appointed to that office by the Secretary upon the recommendation of the Chairman.

(b) A member of the Board (other than the Chairman) may also be known as a Veterans Law Judge. An individual designated as an acting member pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 7101(c)(1) may also be known as an acting Veterans Law Judge.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 512, 7101(a))

[68 FR 6625, Feb. 10, 2003]

§ 19.3 Assignment of proceedings.

(a) *Assignment.* The Chairman may assign a proceeding instituted before the Board, including any motion, to an individual Member or to a panel of three or more Members for adjudication or other appropriate action. The Chairman may participate in a proceeding assigned to a panel of Members.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7102)

(b) *Inability to serve.* If a Member is unable to participate in the disposition of a proceeding or motion to which the Member has been assigned, the Chairman may assign the proceeding or motion to another Member or substitute another Member (in the case of a proceeding or motion assigned to a panel).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7101(a), 7102)

[61 FR 20448, May 7, 1996]

§ 19.4 Principal functions of the Board.

The principal functions of the Board are to make determinations of appellate jurisdiction, consider all applica-

tions on appeal properly before it, conduct hearings on appeal, evaluate the evidence of record, and enter decisions in writing on the questions presented on appeal.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7102, 7104, 7107)

§ 19.5 Criteria governing disposition of appeals.

In the consideration of appeals, the Board is bound by applicable statutes, regulations of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and precedent opinions of the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Board is not bound by Department manuals, circulars, or similar administrative issues.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501(a), 7104(c))

§ 19.6 [Reserved]

§ 19.7 The decision.

(a) *Decisions based on entire record.* The appellant will not be presumed to be in agreement with any statement of fact contained in a Statement of the Case to which no exception is taken. Decisions of the Board are based on a review of the entire record.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7104(a), 7105(d)(4))

(b) *Content.* The decision of the Board will be in writing and will set forth specifically the issue or issues under appellate consideration. Except with respect to issues remanded to the agency of original jurisdiction for further development of the case and appeals which are dismissed because the issue has been resolved by administrative action or because an appellant seeking nonmonetary benefits has died while the appeal was pending, the decision will also include separately stated findings of fact and conclusions of law on all material issues of fact and law presented on the record, the reasons or bases for those findings and conclusions, and an order granting or denying the benefit or benefits sought on appeal or dismissing the appeal.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7104(d))

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(c) A decision by a panel of Members will be by a majority vote of the panel Members.

[57 FR 4104, Feb. 3, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 20449, May 7, 1996]

§ 19.8 Content of Board decision, remand, or order in simultaneously contested claims.

The content of the Board's decision, remand, or order in appeals involving a simultaneously contested claim will be limited to information that directly affects the issues involved in the contested claim. Appellate issues that do not involve all of the contesting parties will be addressed in one or more separate written decisions, remands, or orders that will be furnished only to the appellants concerned and their representatives, if any.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. 552a(b), 38 U.S.C. 5701(a))
[61 FR 68666, Dec. 30, 1996]

§ 19.9 Remand for further development.

(a) *General.* If further evidence, clarification of the evidence, correction of a procedural defect, or any other action is essential for a proper appellate decision, a Veterans Law Judge or panel of Veterans Law Judges shall remand the case to the agency of original jurisdiction, specifying the action to be undertaken.

(b) *Exceptions.* A remand to the agency of original jurisdiction is not necessary for the purposes of:

(1) Clarifying a procedural matter before the Board, including the appellant's choice of representative before the Board, the issues on appeal, or requests for a hearing before the Board;

(2) Consideration of an appeal, in accordance with § 20.903(b) of this chapter, with respect to law not already considered by the agency of original jurisdiction. This includes, but is not limited to, statutes, regulations, and court decisions; or

(3) Reviewing additional evidence received by the Board, if, pursuant to § 20.1304(c) of this chapter, the appellant or the appellant's representative waives the right to initial consideration by the agency of original jurisdiction, or if the Board determines that the benefit or benefits to which the evi-

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dence relates may be fully allowed on appeal.

(c) *Scope.* This section does not apply to:

(1) The Board's request for an opinion under Rule 901 (§ 20.901 of this chapter);

(2) The Board's supplementation of the record with a recognized medical treatise; and

(3) Matters over which the Board has original jurisdiction described in Rules 609 and 610 (§§ 20.609 and 20.610 of this chapter).

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7102, 7103(c), 7104(a)).

[67 FR 3104, Jan. 23, 2002, as amended at 69 FR 53808, Sept. 3, 2004]

§ 19.10 [Reserved]

§ 19.11 Reconsideration panel.

(a) *Assignment of Members.* When a motion for reconsideration is allowed, the Chairman will assign a panel of three or more Members of the Board, which may include the Chairman, to conduct the reconsideration.

(b) *Number of Members constituting a reconsideration panel.* In the case of a matter originally heard by a single Member of the Board, the case shall be referred to a panel of three Members of the Board. In the case of a matter originally heard by a panel of Members of the Board, the case shall be referred to an enlarged panel, consisting of three or more Members than the original panel. In order to obtain a majority opinion, the number of Members assigned to a reconsideration panel may be increased in successive increments of three.

(c) *Members included in the reconsideration panel.* The reconsideration panel may not include any Member who participated in the decision that is being reconsidered. Additional Members will be assigned in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 7102, 7103)

[61 FR 20449, May 7, 1996]

§ 19.12 Disqualification of Members.

(a) *General.* A Member of the Board will disqualify himself or herself in a hearing or decision on an appeal if that appeal involves a determination in which he or she participated or had supervisory responsibility in the agency